

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument/
Saddle Mountain NWR
3250 Port of Benton Blvd.
Richland, Washington 99354
Phone: 509-371-1801
Fax: 509-375-0196

News Release



June 29, 2006

SERVICE ANNOUNCES FIRE PREVENTION ORDER

Special fire restrictions are in effect for all lands managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service within the Hanford Reach National Monument, including the Wahluke Unit, due to high fire danger.

No building, maintaining, attending or using fire, including campfires, warming fires and cooking fires including both charcoal briquette and gas stoves will be allowed. Smoking outside of an enclosed vehicle is prohibited. All fireworks are prohibited.

According to Greg Hughes, Monument Project Leader, "Large fuel loads from spring rains, combined with the hot, dry weather of the past few weeks have created conditions as volatile as we've seen in recent years." Hughes added, "Today's light precipitation shouldn't give anyone a false sense of security, as our flashy fuels dry out quickly in the desert heat and wind. We're asking the public to do their part in minimizing the risk of human-caused fire by following these special restrictions while they're out enjoying summer recreational activities."

Violation of these prohibitions may be punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 and imprisonment of not more than 6 months. In addition, fire suppression costs and applicable county ordinances may be applied to the violations. These prohibitions, pursuant to 50 CFR 27.95, are effective at 12:01 AM on June 30, 2006 and will remain in effect until further notice.

For more information contact Paula Call, Outdoor Recreation Planner, at (509) 371-1801, or Thomas Skinner, Fire Management Officer at (509) 545-4593.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.